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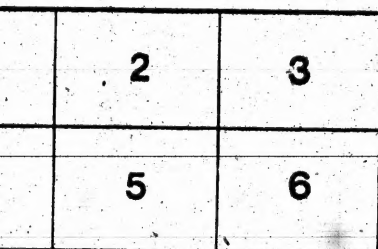
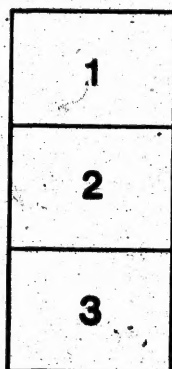
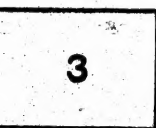
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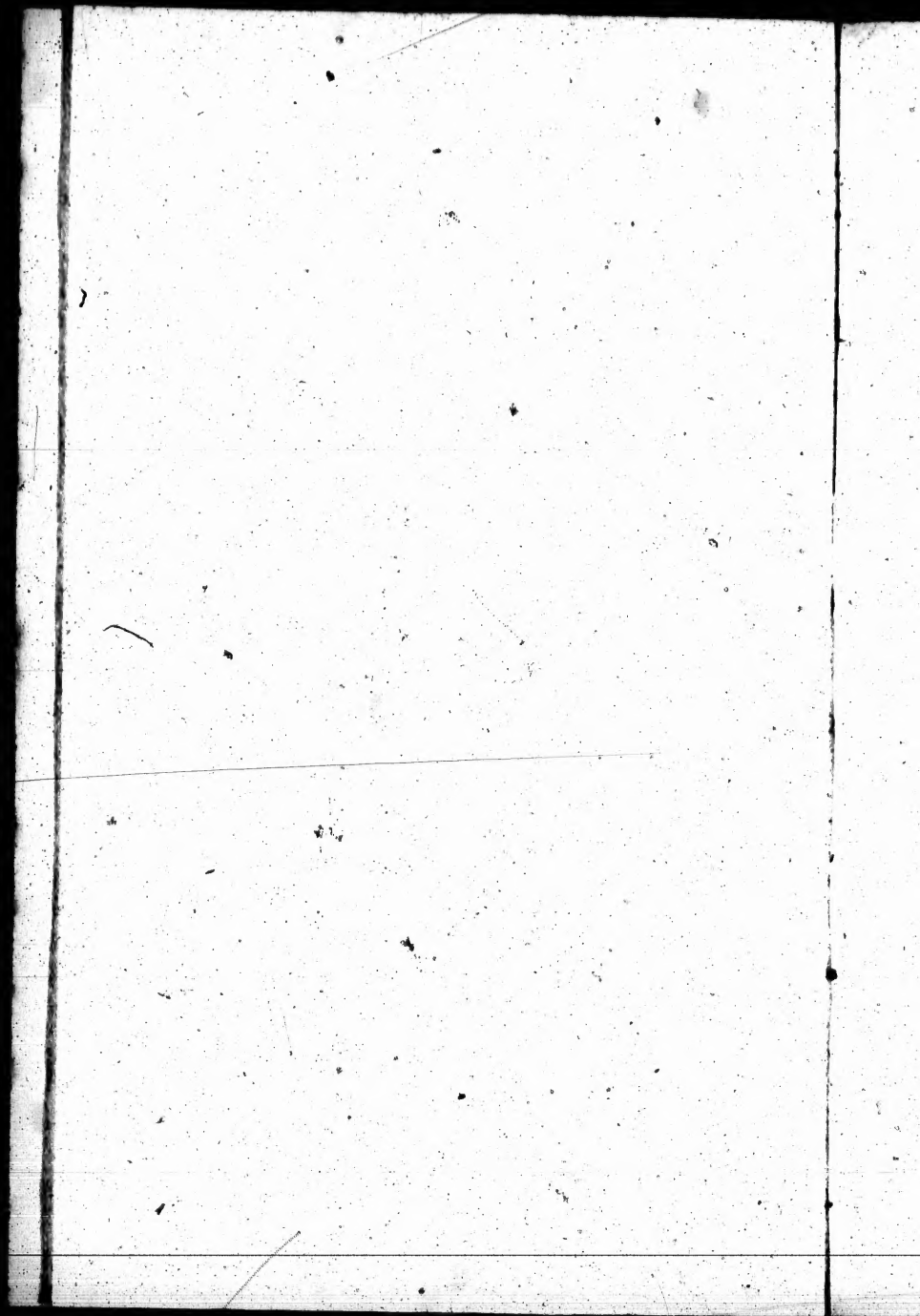
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LETTER TO A METHODIST.

~~~~~  
**BY A PRESBYTER**

**OF THE DIOCESE OF MARYLAND, UNITED STATES.**

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PART I.

INVALIDITY OF MR. WESLEY'S ORDINATIONS.

RE-PUBLISHED

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LETTER TO A METHODIST.

—, December 1, 1843.

Dear Sir,—Your letter, requesting me “briefly to set down on paper” the substance of the various conversations we have had respecting the validity of *Wesley's* ordinations, and other points connected with the polity of the “Methodist Church,” together with the views you have, from time to time, heard me express, of the necessity and reality of *Apostolic Succession* in the Christian Ministry, was, some time ago, received, but a variety of engagements has prevented my complying with your request until the present time. In undertaking even now to comply with it, I am occupying time, which is demanded by other and importunate services; but, as I consider your letter in the light of an earnest desire to ascertain the TRUTH, I do not feel myself at liberty to refuse the information therein requested. In doing this, I shall follow the order above given, and

I. Enquire into the validity of *Wesley's* ordinations.

On this point rests the validity of the Methodist ministry. If Wesley had authority to ordain Dr. Coke a *Bishop*, then it is conceded that the Methodists have a lawful ministry and lawful sacraments; but, if Wesley had no such *authority* to ordain him, then his ordination of Dr. Coke was a nullity, and the Methodists have neither a *lawful* ministry, nor *lawful* sacraments; and as there cannot be a Christian

Church without a *lawful* ministry and *lawful* sacraments, it will, in that case, necessarily follow, that what is called the "Methodist Church," is not, as such, a part of the Church of Christ.

Now, lest you might suppose that some wrong is done to the Methodists in the *issue* here made, I shall quote the *first* section of their "Book of Discipline," to prove that the entire validity of the Methodist ministry is made by *themselves* to rest upon Wesley's ordination of Dr. Coke. It is as follows:

"On the ORIGIN of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

"The preachers* and members of our Society in general, being convinced that there was a great deficiency of vital religion in the Church of England in America, and being in many places destitute of the Christian Sacraments, as several of the clergy had forsaken their Churches, requested the late Rev. John Wesley to take such measures, in his wisdom and prudence, as would afford them suitable relief in their distress.

"In consequence of this, our venerable friend, who, under God, has been the father of the great revival of religion now extending over the earth by means of the Methodists, determined to *ordain* ministers for America; and, for this purpose, in the year 1784, sent over three *regularly*† ordained clergy; but preferring

* At this time, the preachers were considered only *lay-preachers*, and, according to the uniform advice of Mr. Wesley, had declined administering the sacraments. In 1778, a few of these *lay-preachers*, in Virginia, undertook to ordain each other, thinking *thereby* to get the power of administering the sacraments! but, by a vote of one of the Conferences, this ordination was declared INVALID! (Life of Wesley by Coke and Moore, chap. 3, sec. 2.)

† These "*regularly* ordained clergy," were clergy of the Church of England. They were not ordained by Wesley.—The Methodists here *themselves* draw the distinction between "*regularly* ordained clergy" and Wesley's ordinations.

Episcopal mode of Church government to any other, he solemnly set apart, by the imposition of *his* hands and prayer, *one* of them, viz., *Thomas Coke*, Doctor of Civil Law, late of Jesus College, in the University of Oxford, and a *Presbyter* of the Church of England, for the Episcopal office; and having delivered to him letters of Episcopal orders, commissioned* and directed him to set apart *Francis Asbury*, then general assistant of the Methodist Society in America, for the same Episcopal office; he, the said *Francis Asbury*, being first ordained deacon and elder.† In consequence of which, the said *Francis Asbury* was solemnly set apart for the said Episcopal office by prayer, and the imposition of the hands of the said *Thomas Coke*, other regularly‡ ordained ministers assisting in the sacred ceremony. At which time§ the General Conference, held at Baltimore, did unanimously receive the said *Thomas Coke* and *Francis Asbury* as their Bishops, being fully satisfied of the validity of their Episcopal ordination."

Thus you will perceive that the validity of the Methodist ministry is made, by the Methodists them-

* Lest it might be supposed, that Wesley had "commissioned" Dr. Coke, in these (so-called) "*Letters of Episcopal Orders*," to "set apart" Mr. Asbury for the "same Episcopal office," it is proper to state that no such "commission" is given to Dr. Coke in said "letters." Where is this "commission" to be found?

† As some might think from this language, that Wesley had "first ordained [Mr. Asbury] deacon and elder," it should be known, that Asbury received no ordination from Wesley. He was only a *layman*, when Dr. Coke came to America; and Dr. Coke ordained him a *deacon*, *elder*, and *superintendent*, or, (as he afterwards called himself,) a *Bishop*, in the course of a few days! (See Lee's "Short History of the Methodists," p. 94.)

‡ One of these "regularly ordained" ministers was a German minister named *Otterbine*! (Lee's History, p. 94.)

§ This is not true. The General Conference did not at that "time" receive Coke and Asbury as *Bishops*, as will be shown hereafter.

selves, to depend on the validity of Dr. Coke's ordination by Wesley.

Let us, then, seriously enquire, where did Wesley obtain the *authority* to ordain Dr. Coke?

It certainly was not *born* with him; for authority to ordain a minister of Christ is born with no man.

He could not have obtained it from any *temporal* power; for all the kings and governors of the earth combined cannot ordain a minister of Christ, nor confer the authority to ordain one.

Was this authority conferred on Wesley at his *ordination*? Plainly not; because the authority for ordaining, in the Church of England, (of which Wesley was a member), is confined *exclusively* to the order of *Bishops*, and Wesley was not consecrated a Bishop, but only ordained a *Presbyter*. As no such authority was then conferred on Wesley, he did not obtain it when he was ordained.

That you may perceive at a glance, what authority was conferred on Wesley when he was ordained, I shall transcribe the very *words* used by the Bishop who ordained him. You may find them in the Office for "The Ordering of Priests," in the Book of Common Prayer; they are as follows:—

"Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a *Priest* in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands: whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained: And *be thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of God, and of His holy Sacraments*: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

By this *form*, every *Presbyter* of the Church of England is ordained: of course, Wesley was thus ordained; and you may perceive, at once, that *no authority to ordain* was then committed unto him.

Every sacred ordinance of the Church of England since the Reformation has been performed by the hands of a Minister of the Church.

i.e.

But here your preachers meet us with the argument, that Bishops and Presbyters are one and the *same order* of ministers; and, therefore, Wesley being a *Presbyter*, was also a *Bishop*, and therefore had authority to ordain—and this, too, in the teeth of the fact, as I have just proved, that no such authority was given to him at his ordination! Whether Bishop and Presbyter be the *same order*, is a point I shall consider hereafter; at present, I shall content myself with showing, that this argument will not avail the Methodists in the least, because:

If Wesley were a *Bishop*, because he was a *Presbyter*, then Dr. Coke must also have been a *Bishop*, since he was a *Presbyter* when Wesley "laid his hands on him." And if Dr. Coke was already a Bishop, what did Wesley make him by ordaining him? Not a Bishop, surely; for he was one already, if Presbyters and Bishops be the *same order*! What then? He must have made him an officer higher than a Bishop, —an officer unknown to the Church of God! Besides, if Dr. Coke, being a Presbyter, was, *therefore*, a Bishop, he had the same right to ordain Wesley, as Wesley had to ordain him!

This argument, I consider so unanswerable and conclusive, to prove the invalidity of Coke's ordination, that I might well here let the subject rest; but, before I close, shall again advert to it, for reasons which will then appear.

Having thus disposed of one of the chief arguments by which the Methodists attempt to show that Wesley had authority to ordain, I shall now proceed to consider their other great argument, namely, that Wesley had a "Providential call" to ordain.

• When Wesley sent out Dr. Coke, he gave him the following instrument of writing, which "The Book of Discipline," above quoted, calls his "*Letters of Episcopal Orders*":—

i. e. Pope (by Act of Parl^{mt.}).

duced a question in the annual minutes, which was as follows:

"Q. Who are the persons that exercise the *Episcopal office in the Methodist Church in Europe and America?*

"A. John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury, by regular order and succession! !

"The next question was asked *differently* from what it ever had been in any of the former minutes, which stands thus: *

"Q. Who have been elected by the unanimous suffrages of the General Conference to *superintend* the Methodist Connexion in America?

"A. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury."

and with a single eye to his glory, a man this day set apart as a *Superintendent*, by the imposition of my hands* and prayer, (being assisted by other ordained ministers), Thomas Coke, Doctor of Civil Law, a *Presbyter* of the Church of England, and a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work. And I do hereby *recommend* him to all whom it may concern, as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this second day of September, in the year of

* This "imposition of hands" was not done in a *Church*, openly before the people, but in Wesley's *bed-chamber* in Bristol! It soon, however, got noised about, that Wesley had made a *Bishop*! (though there is not a word of the kind in these "*Letters of Episcopal Orders*," as they are called). The Rev. Charles Wesley, who was not in the *secret*, on hearing of it, wrote the following epigram:—

"So easily are *Bishops* made,
By man's, or woman's whim;
Wesley his hands on Coke hath laid,—
But—who laid hands on him?"

thority of a Christian Bishop:

These facts, also, prove that Coke and Asbury *knew* that Wesley did not ordain them Bishops, when he "appointed" them Superintendents of the Methodist Society *under him*. But, if there be any doubts remaining on this point, they will be removed by the perusal of Dr. Coke's letters to Bishops White and Seabury of the Protestant Episcopal Church, marked A, B, in the Appendix.—As you will, of course, give these letters an attentive perusal, it will only be necessary for me briefly to refer to them.

1. It will be observed, in *both* of these letters, that Dr. Coke does not, for a moment, claim to be a *Bishop*.

2. His letter to Bishop White shows, that he exceeded the authority given him by Mr. Wesley, and that Mr. Wesley disapproved of his proceedings.

"If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding these poor sheep in the wilderness, *I will gladly embrace it*. At present *I cannot see* any better method than I have taken."

Whether Wesley, then, had a "providential call" to ordain, depends upon the *fact*, whether there was "*any other way*" to obtain ministers for God's Church, (for the Methodists had not yet left the Church), than his taking upon *himself* the authority to ordain Dr. Coke; because, if it can be plainly shown that there was an "other way," then it is evident, on Wesley's own ground, that he had no such "providential call."

Rightly to solve this question, it will be necessary to advert to the position of the American Church at that time. Before these "United States" were separated from Great Britain by the Revolution, the

* Reprinted from a tract written by Dr. George Peck, a Methodist preacher.

† Lee's Short History, page 91.

have been valid, for *he* was a Presbyter;) and, consequently, that he knew and believed that Presbyters and Bishops were not the *same order*.

7. These letters, too, show conclusively, what was Dr. Coke's opinion of *Wesley's* ordinations (as they are called)—that is that they possessed *no validity* whatever; and, therefore, that when Wesley "appointed" him a Superintendent of the Methodist Society, he did not "ordain" him a *Bishop* of the Church of God.

I shall now proceed to prove, that the Methodists themselves do not believe that Presbyters and Bishops are the *same order*.

Because, if Presbyters and Bishops were the *same order*, when a man is ordained a Presbyter, or Elder, he would be a Bishop, without any further ordination;

four of their number to the office of Bishop; and these four proceeded to England, where *three* of them were consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and *one* of them in Scotland by the Bishops of the Church in that country. The successors and spiritual descendants of these *four*, deriving their authority from the blessed Redeemer, through "the imposition of the hands" of His *lawful* Bishops, have multiplied to *twenty-two*, with a prospect of further increase; and their authority is acknowledged by more than *twelve hundred* clergy, who derive their ordination from them and their predecessors. Here, then, *was* an "other way" of obtaining a supply of ministers, than by a *Presbyter* undertaking to ordain another *Presbyter* a *Bishop* in his chamber! And, as Wesley makes his "providential call" depend on the *fact* of there not being "any other way," and this proof that there was another way, makes it plain, to a demonstration, that Wesley had no "providential call" to ordain whatever! It was just *seventy-three days* after this ordi-

*f. H. had 1000 + 1000
spiritual as f. H. had
politics: + that was a*

*had
2000*

will find that I there lay down the following position, namely: that, if Wesley had authority to ordain Dr. Coke a Bishop, then, it is conceded, that the Methodists have a lawful ministry, and lawful sacraments; but if Wesley had no such authority to ordain him, then his ordination was a nullity, and the Methodists have neither a lawful ministry, nor lawful sacraments.

Now, sir, this point, that Wesley had no such authority to ordain, I have fully proved, by showing,

1. That it was not *born* with him;
2. That he did not obtain it from any *temporal* power;
3. That it was not conferred on him at his *ordination* by the Bishops of the Church of England;
4. That he did not *ordain* Dr. Coke a Bishop, because if Bishop and Presbyter be the *same order*, Dr.

"called," as I have shown, by those possessing authority to call and ordain ministers for the Church of Christ, namely, by the lawful Bishops of the Churches of England and Scotland; thus showing, beyond the power of contradiction, that God had not forsaken His Church, and that Wesley's thinking (for he tells us he only *thought* so) that he had a "providential call," was only the imagining of a fallible man, trusting too much to his own narrow view of the circumstances in which he was placed. And thus, sir, is scattered to the winds, the other grand argument for the validity of Wesley's ordinations.

Hitherto, you will have observed, I have argued this question on the ground taken by the Methodists,

* Wesley saw this when it was too late. Dr. Coke, in his letter to Bishop White, (Appendix A.), says, "He (Mr. Wesley) being pressed by our friends on this side of the water, for ministers to administer the sacraments to them, (there being very few Clergy of the Church of England then in the States), went farther, I am sure, than he would have gone, if he had foreseen some events which followed."

had for his ordination a good & sufficient warrant.

did not ordain him one.

7. That Dr. Coke, by his applying to Bishop Seabury to ordain Asbury a *Bishop*, admits that his own ordination of Asbury to be a Bishop was a mock ordination—*without any real validity*.

8. That Dr. Coke, by applying to Bishops White and Seabury to admit the Methodist preachers into the Protestant Episcopal Church (when the *condition* of their admission was, that they would be *re-ordained*) showed that he knew, that *his* ordination of them was invalid;

9. That Dr. Coke knew that Wesley had no *authority* to ordain him a *Bishop*, and that he did *not* ordain him one; otherwise he would not have applied to Bishop Seabury to ordain him a *Bishop*;

"I have appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint *Superintendents* over our Brethren in North America."

Now, I beg you, to examine this language narrowly.

1. Wesley does not say he *ordained* Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, but simply that he "*appointed*" them. But, by using the word "*appointed*," did Wesley mean that he ordained them? Certainly not; because the same word (*appointed*) is used respecting them both, and Wesley did *not* ordain Asbury, for Asbury was, at that time, in America, and had been for several years previously. Nevertheless, Wesley "*appointed*" *him* a Superintendent, as well as Coke; and an ordination was not necessary to constitute *Asbury* a Superinten-

* "Ordination is not to be confounded with the *designating* or *setting apart* of a person to the work of the ministry; for, in strictness, any one may do this for himself, or it may be done for him by his parents, guardians, &c., and involves nothing but what any *layman* may perform; whereas *ordination* is the actual communication of authority from a legitimate source, to execute those functions which appertain to the several orders of the ministry."—*Staunton*.

that an entire separation should take place. He, being pressed by our friends on this side of the water for ministers to administer the sacraments to them, (there being very few clergy of the Church of England then in the States,) went farther, I am sure, than he would have gone, if he had foreseen some events which followed. And this I am certain of—that he is now sorry for the separation.

But what can be done for a re-union, which I much wish for; and to accomplish which Mr. Wesley, I have no doubt, would use his influence to the utmost? The affection of a very considerable number of the preachers, and most of the people, is very strong towards him, notwithstanding the excessive ill usage he received from a few. My interest also is not small; and both his and mine would readily and to the utmost be used to accomplish that (to us) very desirable object; if a readiness were shown by the Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church to reunite.

ordination. No, sir, there is not a particle of evidence to prove that Wesley ever "ordained" Dr. Coke.—Coke was placed precisely on the same footing with Asbury (who was a *layman*)—Wesley "appointed" them both Superintendents of the Methodist Society in North America; and the only difference between them is this: that in "appointing" Dr. Coke, Wesley did it in rather a more formal manner, by placing his hands on his head, and praying over him!

* At that time, there was no such thing in existence as a "Methodist Church," Wesley, and the Methodists themselves only spoke of themselves as the Methodist *society*, or *societies*, or sometimes as the Methodist *Connexion*, and that Wesley was their founder and father. Of course, it was only a *human society*, and nothing more: indeed, at that time, it did not claim to be any thing more; and the idea of *ordaining* a Superintendent, or any other minister, for a human society, is absurd.—Lee says, (page 47.) "We were only a religious society, and not a Church." At page 94, he says: "At this Conference we formed ourselves into a regular Church." How a religious society could be turned into a Church, he does not inform us. This was *after* Coke came to America.

ees were removed out of the way. I must here observe, that between sixty and seventy only, out of the two hundred and fifty, have been ordained presbyters, and about sixty deacons, (only.) The presbyters are the choicest of the whole.

2. The other preachers would hardly submit to a re-union, if the possibility of their rising up to ordination depended on the present bishops in America. Because though they are *all*, I think I may say, zealous, pious, and very useful men, yet they are not acquainted with the learned languages. Besides, they would argue,—If the present bishops would waive the article of the learned languages, yet their successors might not.

My desire of a re-union is so sincere and earnest that these difficulties almost make me tremble; and yet something must be done before the death of Mr. Wesley, otherwise I shall despair of success: for though my influence among the Methodists in these States, as well

answer, read thus:

"Q. Is there any other business to be done in Conference?"

"A. The electing and ordaining of *Bishops*, Elders, and Deacons.

"This was the *first* time that our Superintendents ever gave themselves the title of *Bishops* in the minutes. They changed the title themselves without the consent of the Conference!"

Thus it appears that a fraud was practised by one of these Superintendents to get himself recognized as a Bishop—no less a fraud than *altering* the minutes of the Conference! and this, too, by endeavouring to make it appear to the world, that they had been recognized as *Bishops* by the Conference since the first foundation of "the Methodist Church," in 1784!—whereas the Conference had only recognized them as *Superintendents*—the office to which Wesley had appointed them—and this alteration of their title, for this purpose, by *themselves*, took place in 1787!

will find me candid and faithful.

I have, notwithstanding, been guilty of inadvertencies. Very lately I found myself obliged (for the pacifying of my conscience) to write a penitential letter to the Rev. Mr. Jarratt, which gave him great satisfaction; and for the same reason I must write another to the Rev. Mr. Pettigrew. When I was last in America, I prepared and corrected a great variety of things for our magazines, indeed almost every thing that was printed, except some loose hints which I had taken of one of my journeys, and which I left in my hurry with Mr. Asbury, without any correction, entreating that no part of them might be printed which would be improper or offensive. But through great inadvertency (I suppose) he suffered some reflections on the characters of the two above-mentioned gentlemen to be inserted in the magazine, for which I am very sorry: and probably shall not rest till I have made my acknowledgment more public, though Mr. Jarratt does not desire it.

Asbury did not dare to assign Wesley's "appointment" as the ground for their assuming the title of the chief officer in the Church of God; otherwise they would not have assigned such a school-boy reason for their unjustifiable act.

Lee, in his "History," then goes on further to remark:

"Some of the preachers opposed the alteration, and wished to retain the former title, [that of superintendent:] but a majority of the preachers agreed to let the word *Bishop* remain; and, in the annual minutes for the next year, the first question is: 'who are the *Bishops* of our Church for the United States?'"

Thus was consummated one of the most startling frauds of modern times; and the whole "Methodist Church" has, ever since, been led to believe, that Wesley ordained Dr. Coke a Bishop, and then "commissioned" him to ordain Asbury a Bishop, and that these two were actually recognized and called *Bishops* by the Methodist Conference since the first foundation of their "Church," in 1784! And, what is more,

B.

Dr. Coke to Bishop Seabury.

The original of this letter is in the possession of Dr. Seabury,
Editor of the CHURCHMAN, New York.

The Right Rev. Father in God, Bishop SEABURY,
RIGHT REV. SIR,—From your well-known character,
I am going to open my mind to you on a subject of very
great moment.

Being educated a member of the Church of England
from my earliest infancy, being ordained of that church,
and having taken two degrees in arts, and two degrees in
civil law, in the University of Oxford, which is entirely
under the patronage of the Church of England, I was al-
most a bigot in its favor when I first joined that great and
good man, Mr. John Wesley, which is fourteen years ago.

c *

minutes were altered; and it was not until the "next
Conference" afterwards, that the Superintendents
were "received" as Bishops! and when the Confe-
rence did consent to "receive them as *Bishops*," it
was not done "unanimously," but was the act of only
"a majority" of the preachers. And thus are the
Methodists imposed on until this very hour!

It is enough to make one shudder, when contem-
plating the manner in which these men attempted to
thrust themselves into the chief office of the Christian
ministry. The recollection of it appears to have
grievously weighed upon Dr. Coke's conscience, when
he afterwards so earnestly wrote to Bishop Seabury
to ordain him and Asbury *Bishops*; and to Bishops
White and Seabury to ordain their preachers over
again! And well it might weigh upon his consci-
ence! The wonder is, it did not drive him into a
mad-house. Wesley himself tells us the effect it
had upon him, when he heard of Asbury claiming to
be a Bishop! He tells us it made him *shudder*—and
well it might. He thus writes to Asbury:

tude. Our work now reaches to Boston, New-
Wilkes county, in Georgia, southward; and to Albany,
Vermont, Lake Champlain, Redstone, and Kentucky,
westward; a length of about 1300 or 1400 miles, and a
breadth of between 500 and 1000. Our society in the
States amounts to upwards of 60,000. These, I am per-
suaded, may, with safety, be multiplied by five, to give
us our regular Sunday's congregations, which will make
300,000. If the calculations of some great writers be just,
three-fifths of any given country consist of un-adults; so
that the families, the adults of which regularly attend
divine service among us, amount, according to this mode
of calculation, to 750,000; about a fifth part of these are
blacks. How great, then, would be the strength of our
Church, (will you give me leave to call it so? I mean the
Protestant Episcopal,) if the two sticks were made one!

But how can this be done? The magnitude of the ob-
ject would justify considerable sacrifices. A solemn en-
gagement to use your prayer book in all our places of

study to be *little*, you study to be *great*; I *creep*, you
strut along; I found a *school*, you a *college*. Nay,
and call it after your own names! Oh, beware!
Do not seek to be something! Let me be nothing,
and Christ be all in all.

"One instance of this, your greatness, has given
me great concern. How can you, how *dare* you suf-
fer yourself to be called a *Bishop*?

"I *shudder*, I start at the very thought! Men
may call me a *knave*, or a *fool*, a *rascal*, a *scoundrel*,
and I am content; but they shall never, by my con-
sent, call me a Bishop! For my sake, for God's
sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this! Let
the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the
Methodists know their calling better.

"Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that
is in my heart; and let this, when I am no more seen,
bear witness how sincerely

"I am your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

* From Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. ii, page 285.

pass through an election for this office; but if he bring a testimonial, signed by three elders, one of whom must be what we call a presiding elder, one who has the government of a district, i. e. several circuits joined together, three deacons, three unordained preachers, and the majority of the class of which he is a member, or the stewards and leaders of the whole society of which he is a member, a superintendent may then, if he please, ordain him; and a great many of the oldest and wisest of the local preachers have been ordained deacons on this plan.

Now, on a re-union taking place, our ministers, both elders and deacons, would expect to have, and ought to have, the same authority they have at present, of administering the ordinances according to the respective powers already invested in them for this purpose. I well know that they must submit to a re-ordination, which, I believe, might be easily brought about, if every other hindrance

in the above letter, "Let the Presbyterians do as they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better." That is, let the Presbyterians, if they please, call themselves *Bishops*, but let not the Methodists follow their example—let them know their calling better than to call themselves *Bishops*, when they are not.

Now, let it be remembered, that the question before us is: Did Wesley, when he "appointed" Coke and Asbury "Superintendents" of the Methodist Society, ordain them *Bishops*?

It is certain he did not. This letter to Asbury, in the very plainest manner possible—words cannot be plainer—declares that Asbury was *no Bishop*; and yet Coke did for Asbury precisely what Wesley did for Coke—he laid his hands upon him, and prayed over him: and if, in Wesley's judgment, this imposition of hands and prayer by a Presbyter, did not constitute Asbury a Bishop, neither could they, in Wesley's judgment, have constituted Dr. Coke a Bishop; for Coke's authority to ordain was the same as Wesley's, (which was no authority at all,) both of them

I am not in danger from your enmity, expected, in the present instance, of pressing after worldly honor; as it is likely I shall be elected President of the European Methodists, and shall not, I believe, receive greater marks of respect from the Methodists in these States, supposing I ever be a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, than they are at present so kind as to show me.

Mr. Asbury, our resident superintendent, is a great and good man. He possesses, and justly, the esteem of most of the preachers, and most of the people. Now if the general convention of the clergy consented that he should be consecrated a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on the supposition of a re-union, a very capital hindrance would be removed out of the way.

Again, I love the Methodists in America, and could not think of leaving them entirely, whatever might happen to me in Europe. The preachers and people also love me.

lay was a bishop, & that Wesley was a Bishop; and 3. That Coke ordained Asbury a Bishop. One would suppose, when Asbury had Wesley's letter, (dated September 30th, 1788,) in his pocket, declaring that he was no Bishop, and that Asbury was no Bishop, that this would not be a very easy matter to accomplish. But these men did not stick at tri-

* In his letter "appointing" Dr. Coke a Superintendent, Wesley says: "Whereas many of the people in the Southern Provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care," &c. In his letter to Asbury, he says: "The supplies which Dr. Coke provides for you, he could not collect, were it not for me—were it not that I not only permit him to collect, but support him in so doing." The following question and answer were adopted at the Conference in 1784. "Q. 2. What can be done in order to the future union of the Methodists? A. During the life of the Rev. John Wesley, we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the Gospel, ready in matters belonging to Church Government, to OBEY HIS COMMANDS," &c. (Lee's History, p. 95.) Mr. Lee afterwards observes: "This engagement to obey Mr. Wesley's commands, in matters belonging to Church Government, was afterwards the cause of some uneasiness." No wonder. Wesley's letter to Asbury when he set up for a Bishop, was well calculated to make him uneasy.

files; they had already fabricated a new set of minutes for their "Church" to get the *title* of Bishops, and they were determined to go all lengths, sooner than fail in their project to be accounted *real* Bishops. The Bishops of the *Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States* had now for some time been consecrated; Coke and Asbury knew that *their* commission was authentic; that *they* had been consecrated in England and Scotland by *lawful* Bishops; and that the Church had received them as Bishops, in a regular succession from the Apostles. Coke and Asbury knew all this; and alongside of these men, as Methodist "Superintendents" they felt their littleness, although they had assumed the name of what they so much coveted! They knew that they had the *name* of a Bishop, and that was all! They had no succession to point to! Let us see, then, how they proceeded to get the *reality*. At one of their Conferences, held in the year 1789, Mr. Lee, in his "History," informs us (p. 142,) that,

"The *Bishops*, (that is, Coke and Asbury) introduced a question in the annual minutes, which was as follows:

"Q. *Who are the persons that exercise the Episcopal office in the Methodist Church in Europe and America?*

"A. John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury, by regular order and succession! !

"The next question was asked *differently* from what it ever had been in any of the former minutes, which stands thus: "

"Q. *Who have been elected by the unanimous suffrages of the General Conference to superintend the Methodist Connexion in America?*

"A. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury."

The drift of these questions and answers can be seen at once. Their object is to make it appear (1.) That it was the *Conference* and not Wesley, which "appointed" them *Superintendents!* and (2.) To make it appear, that Wesley was a Bishop, and ordained them bishops, and that thus they have a regular *succession* from a lawful *Bishop!* Now let it be remembered, that these questions were introduced by Coke and Asbury themselves! *They* saw the full drift of them, although the Conference might not have seen it! Calmly and without prejudice review this proceeding; and then taking it in connection with the *fact*, that they fabricated a new set of minutes to get the *name* of a Bishop, and with the *fact* that Asbury had in his possession Wesley's letter declaring that *he* was no Bishop, and that *Asbury* was no Bishop—I say, calmly and without prejudice review this proceeding, in connection with these *facts*, and then say, whether modern or ancient times afford a more daring, or unhallowed scheme, than this presents, of men undertaking to usurp the office and authority of a Christian Bishop!

These facts, also, prove that Coke and Asbury *knew* that Wesley did not ordain them Bishops, when he "appointed" them Superintendents of the Methodist Society *under him*. But, if there be any doubts remaining on this point, they will be removed by the perusal of Dr. Coke's letters to Bishops White and Seabury of the Protestant Episcopal Church, marked A, B, in the Appendix.—As you will, of course, give these letters an attentive perusal, it will only be necessary for me briefly to refer to them.

1. It will be observed, in *both* of these letters, that Dr. Coke does not, for a moment, claim to be a *Bishop*.

2. His letter to Bishop White shows, that he exceeded the authority given him by Mr. Wesley, and that Mr. Wesley disapproved of his proceedings.

3. In his letter to Bishop Seabury, he asks Bishop Seabury to ordain him "*a Bishop of the Methodist Society!*" Thereby acknowledging that Wesley, when he "appointed" him a Superintendent, did not ordain him a Bishop, of that Society!

4. In his letter to Bishop Seabury, he asks Bishop Seabury to ordain Mr. Asbury a *Bishop of the Methodist Society*; thereby acknowledging that *his* ordination of Asbury to be a Bishop was only a *mock ordination!*

5. In his letter to Bishop Seabury, asking for the admission of the Methodist preachers into the Protestant Episcopal Church, Dr. Coke says, that he "*knows that they must submit to re-ordination.*" Of course, the ordination they received from *him* was good for nothing, otherwise there would have been no necessity for their being ordained over again.

6. These letters prove, beyond question, that Coke knew and believed, that *Bishops alone* possessed authority to ordain; that no such authority was possessed by *Presbyters* (otherwise *his own* ordinations would have been valid, for *he* was a Presbyter;) and, consequently, that he knew and believed that Presbyters and Bishops were not the *same order*.

7. These letters, too, show conclusively, what was Dr. Coke's opinion of *Wesley's* ordinations (as they are called)—that is that they possessed *no validity* whatever; and, therefore, that when Wesley "appointed" him a Superintendent of the Methodist Society, he did not "ordain" him a *Bishop* of the Church of God.

I shall now proceed to prove, that the Methodists themselves do not believe that Presbyters and Bishops are the *same order*.

Because, if Presbyters and Bishops were the *same order*, when a man is ordained a Presbyter, or Elder, he would *be* a Bishop, without any further ordination;

but the Methodists require those, whom they are about to elevate to the order of *Bishop*, to submit to a *third* ordination, and thereby acknowledge, that they do not consider a *Presbyter* (or *Elder*) to be a *Bishop* without such ordination, and consequently denying them to be the *same order*.

The Methodist *form* for the ordination of *Presbyters*, (or *Elders*,) may be found at page 127 of the Methodist "Book of Discipline;" their *form* for the ordination of those they call *Bishops*, may be found at page 140 of the same book. And, as these "forms" were drawn up by *Wesley*, from the ordination offices in the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, it is an additional proof (if any were wanting) that *he* did not believe *Presbyters* and *Bishops* to be the *same order*—because, if *he* did, why did *he*, why do the Methodists *now*, require those they call *Elders*, (or *Presbyters*) to submit to a *third* ordination, before they allow them to be called *Bishops*?

Let those answer this question who can.

By a reference to the third page of this letter, you will find that I there lay down the following position, namely: that, *if Wesley had authority to ordain Dr. Coke a Bishop, then, it is conceded, that the Methodists have a lawful ministry, and lawful sacraments; but if Wesley had no such authority to ordain him, then his ordination was a nullity, and the Methodists have neither a lawful ministry, nor lawful sacraments.*

Now, sir, this point, that *Wesley* had no such authority to ordain, I have fully proved, by showing,

1. That it was not *born* with him;
2. That he did not obtain it from any *temporal* power;
3. That it was not conferred on him at his *ordination* by the *Bishops* of the Church of England;
4. That he did not *ordain* *Dr. Coke* a *Bishop*, because if *Bishop* and *Presbyter* be the *same order*, *Dr.*

Coke was already a Bishop *without Wesley's ordination*—Dr. Coke being a Presbyter of the Church of England;

5. That Wesley had no "providential call" to ordain.

This, sir, would be sufficient; but I have proved far more than this: I have proved,

1. That Wesley did not "ordain" Dr. Coke a *Bishop*, but only "appointed" him a "Superintendent" of the Methodist Society;

2. That in "appointing" him a Superintendent, Wesley did not ordain him a *Bishop*;

3. That the Methodist Conference did not for several years receive Coke and Asbury as *Bishops*, but only as Superintendents;

4. That Wesley denied (in his letter to Asbury) that *he* was a Bishop;

5. That Wesley denied (in the same letter) that *Asbury* was a Bishop;

6. That Dr. Coke, by his applying to Bishop Seabury to ordain him *a Bishop*, admits that Wesley did not ordain him one.

7. That Dr. Coke, by his applying to Bishop Seabury to ordain Asbury a *Bishop*, admits that his own ordination of Asbury to be a Bishop was a mock ordination—*without any real validity*.

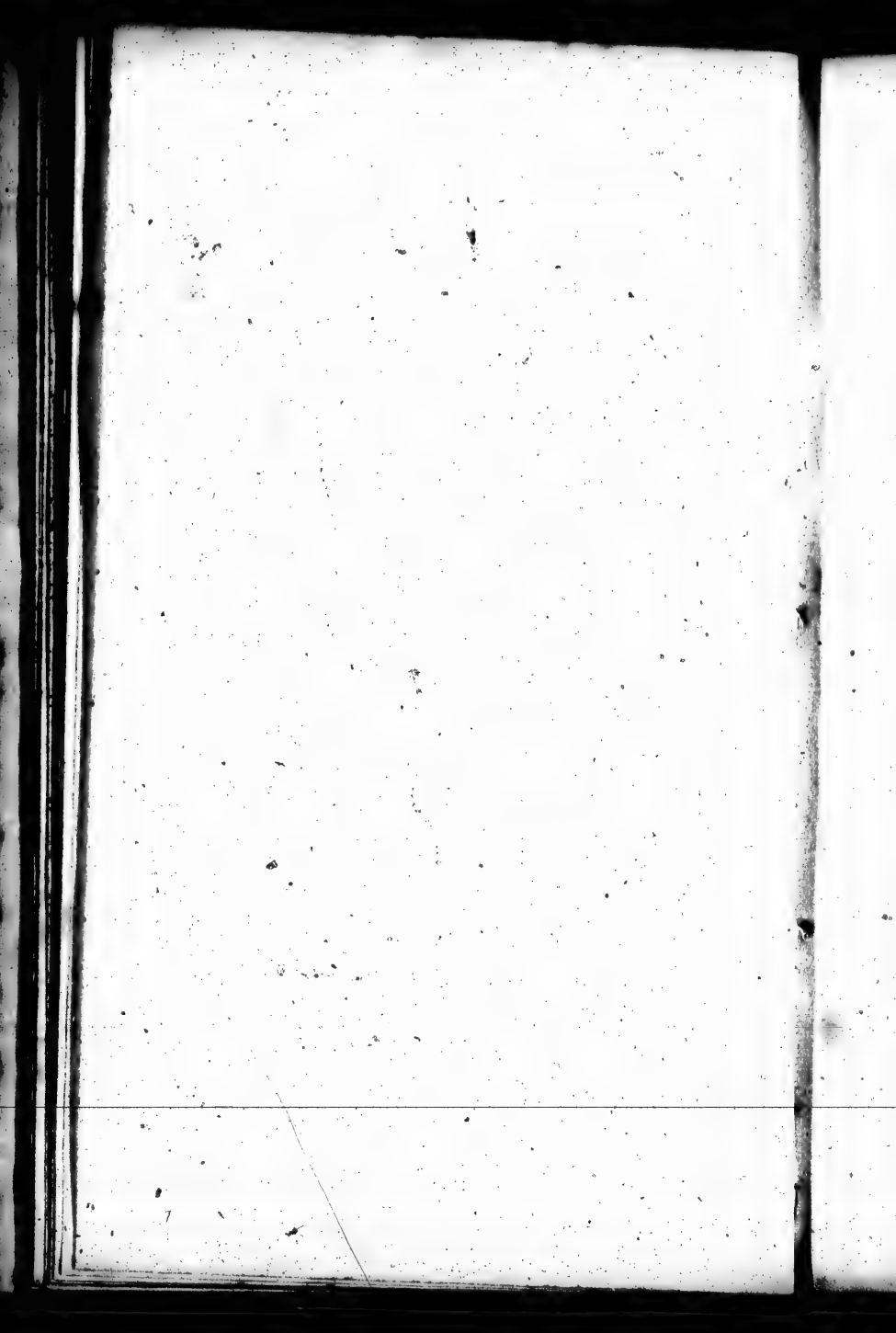
8. That Dr. Coke, by applying to Bishops White and Seabury to admit the Methodist preachers into the Protestant Episcopal Church (when the *condition* of their admission was, that they would be *re-ordained*) showed that he knew, that *his* ordination of them was invalid;

9. That Dr. Coke knew that Wesley had no *authority* to ordain him a *Bishop*, and that he did *not* ordain him one; otherwise he would not have applied to Bishop Seabury to ordain him a *Bishop*;

10. That, consequently he *knew* when Wesley "appointed" him a Superintendent of the Methodist Society, he did not ordain him a *Bishop* of the Church of God.

11. That the Methodists do not believe Presbyters, or Elders and Bishops, to be the *same order*, because they have two distinct "forms" of ordination, one for Elders and another for Bishops; and because they will not suffer those they call *Elders* to be called *Bishops* until they have been a *third* time ordained.

I have thus, sir, examined most minutely every argument by which it is pretended to establish the validity of Wesley's ordination of Dr. Coke; and I have shown, conclusively, not only that Wesley did not ordain him, but that Dr. Coke did not *believe* that he had ordained him—and that the whole transaction was destitute of even the *shadow* of validity. The validity of Dr. Coke's ordination, then, being completely destroyed, (and the validity of the present Methodist ministry depending upon that—so that they must stand, or fall, together,) it is plain, to a demonstration, that the Methodists have no *lawful* ministry whatever, and that those they call their Bishops, Elders, and Deacons, are only *laymen*. And as there can be no *lawful* sacraments without a *lawful* ministry, it is equally plain they have no *Sacraments*. And as there cannot be a Church of Christ, unless there be a *lawful* ministry and *lawful* sacraments, it is equally plain, also, that the (so called) "Methodist Church" is not a Church of Christ.



APPENDIX.

A.

Dr. Coke to Bishop White.

This letter is reprinted from Bishop White's *Memoirs of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, first edition, pages 424 to 429.

Right Rev. Sir.—Permit me to intrude a little on your time upon a subject of great importance.

You, I believe, are conscious that I was brought up in the Church of England, and have been ordained a presbyter of that Church. For many years I was prejudiced, even I think to bigotry, in favour of it: but through a variety of causes or incidents, to mention which would be tedious and useless, my mind was exceedingly biased on the other side of the question. In consequence of this, I am not sure but I went farther in the separation of our church in America, than Mr. Wesley, from whom I had received my commission, did intend. He did indeed solemnly invest me, as far as he had a right so to do, with Episcopal authority, but did not intend, I think, that an entire separation should take place. He, being pressed by our friends on this side of the water for ministers to administer the sacraments to them, (there being very few clergy of the Church of England then in the States,) went farther, I am sure, than he would have gone, if he had foreseen some events which followed. And this I am certain of—that he is now sorry for the separation.

But what can be done for a re-union, which I much wish for; and to accomplish which Mr. Wesley, I have no doubt, would use his influence to the utmost? The affection of a very considerable number of the preachers, and most of the people, is very strong towards him, notwithstanding the excessive ill usage he received from a few. My interest also is not small; and both his and mine would readily and to the utmost be used to accomplish that (to us) very desirable object; if a readiness were shown by the Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church to reunite.

It is even to your church an object of great importance. We have now about 60,000 adults in our society in these States, and about 250 travelling ministers and preachers; besides a great number of local preachers, very far exceeding the number of travelling preachers; and some of those local preachers are men of very considerable abilities. But if we number the Methodists as most people number the members of their church, viz, by the families which constantly attend the divine ordinances in their places of worship, they will make a larger body than you probably conceive. The society, I believe, may be safely multiplied by five on an average to give us our stated congregations, which will then amount to 300,000. And if the calculation which, I think, some eminent writers have made, be just, that three-fifths of mankind are unadult (if I may use the expression) at any given period, it will follow that all the families, the adults of which form our congregations in these States, amount to 750,000. About one-fifth of these are blacks. The work now extends in length from Boston to the south of Georgia; and in breadth from the Atlantic to lake Champlain, Vermont, Albany, Redstone, Holstein, Kentucky, Cumberland, &c. But there are many hindrances in the way. Can they be removed?

1. Our ordained ministers will not, ought not, to give up their right of administering the sacraments. I don't think that the generality of them, perhaps none of them, would refuse to submit to a re-ordination, if other hindrances were removed out of the way. I must here observe, that between sixty and seventy only, out of the two hundred and fifty, have been ordained presbyters, and about sixty deacons, (only.) The presbyters are the choicest of the whole.

2. The other preachers would hardly submit to a re-union, if the possibility of their rising up to ordination depended on the present bishops in America. Because though they are *all*, I think I may say, zealous, pious, and very useful men, yet they are not acquainted with the learned languages. Besides, they would argue,—If the present bishops would waive the article of the learned languages, yet their successors might not.

My desire of a re-union is so sincere and earnest that these difficulties almost make me tremble; and yet something must be done before the death of Mr. Wesley, otherwise I shall despair of success: for though my influence among the Methodists in these States, as well

as in Europe, is, I doubt not, increasing, yet Mr. Asbury, whose influence is very capital, will not easily comply: nay, I know he will be exceedingly averse to it.

In Europe, where some steps had been taken; tending to a separation, all is at an end. Mr. Wesley is a determined enemy of it, and I have lately borne an open and successful testimony against it.

Shall I be favored with a private interview with you in Philadelphia? I shall be there, God willing, on Tuesday, the 17th of May. If this be agreeable, I'll beg of you just to signify it in a note directed to me, at Mr. Jacob Baker's, merchant, Market street, Philadelphia: or, if you please, by a few lines sent to me by the return of the post, at Philip Rogers', Esq., in Baltimore, from yourself or Dr. Magaw, and I will wait upon you with my friend Dr. Magaw. We can then enlarge on these subjects.

I am conscious of it, that secrecy is of great importance in the present state of the business, till the minds of you, your brother bishops, and Mr. Wesley, be circumstantially known. I must therefore beg that these things be confined to yourself and Dr. Magaw, till I have the honor of seeing you.

Thus, you see, I have made a bold venture on your honor and candor, and have opened my whole heart to you on the subject, as far as the extent of a small letter will allow me. If you put equal confidence in me, you will find me candid and faithful.

I have, notwithstanding, been guilty of inadvertencies. Very lately I found myself obliged (for the pacifying of my conscience) to write a penitential letter to the Rev. Mr. Jarratt, which gave him great satisfaction; and for the same reason I must write another to the Rev. Mr. Pettigrew. When I was last in America, I prepared and corrected a great variety of things for our magazines, indeed almost every thing that was printed, except some loose hints which I had taken of one of my journeys, and which I left in my hurry with Mr. Asbury, without any correction, entreating that no part of them might be printed which would be improper or offensive. But through great inadvertency (I suppose) he suffered some reflections on the characters of the two above-mentioned gentlemen to be inserted in the magazine, for which I am very sorry: and probably shall not rest till I have made my acknowledgment more public, though Mr. Jarratt does not desire it.

I am not sure whether I have not also offended you, sir, by accepting of one of the offers made me by you and Dr. Magaw, of the use of your churches about six years ago, on my first visit to Philadelphia, without informing you of our plan of separation from the Church of England. If I did offend, (as I doubt I did, especially from what you said on the subject to Mr. Richard Dallam, of Abington,) I sincerely beg your and Dr. Magaw's pardon. I'll endeavor to amend. But, alas! I am a frail, weak creature.

I will intrude no longer at present. One thing only I will claim from your candor—that if you have no thoughts of improving this proposal, you will burn this letter, and take no more notice of it, (for it would be a pity to have us entirely alienated from each other, if we cannot unite in the manner my ardent wishes desire.) But if you will further negotiate the business, I will explain my mind still more fully to you on the probabilities of success.

In the meantime, permit me, with great respect, to subscribe myself,

Right Rev. Sir;

Your very humble servant in Christ,
THOMAS COKE.

Richmond, April 24, 1791.

The Right Rev. Father in God, Bishop WHITE.

You must excuse interlineations, &c., as I am just going into the country, and have no time to transcribe.

B.

Dr. Coke to Bishop Seabury.

The original of this letter is in the possession of Dr. Seabury, Editor of the CHURCHMAN, New York.

The Right Rev. Father in God, Bishop SEABURY,

RIGHT REV. SIR,—From your well-known character, I am going to open my mind to you on a subject of very great moment.

Being educated a member of the Church of England from my earliest infancy, being ordained of that church, and having taken two degrees in arts, and two degrees in civil law, in the University of Oxford, which is entirely under the patronage of the Church of England, I was almost a bigot in its favor when I first joined that great and good man, Mr. John Wesley, which is fourteen years ago.

For five or six years after my union with Mr. Wesley, I remained fixed in my attachment to the Church of England: but afterwards, for many reasons, which it would be tedious and useless to mention, I changed my sentiments, and promoted a separation from it, as far as my influence reached. Within these two years I am come back again: my love for the Church of England has returned. I think I am attached to it on a ground much more rational, and consequently much less likely to be shaken than formerly: I have many a time run into error; but to be ashamed of confessing my error, when convinced of it, has never been one of my defects.—Therefore, when I was fully convinced of my error, in the steps I took to bring about a separation from the Church of England in Europe, I delivered, before a congregation of about 3000 people, in our largest chapel in Dublin, on a Sunday evening, after preaching, an exhortation, which, in fact, amounted to a recantation of my error. Some time afterward, I repeated the same in our largest chapels in London, and in several other parts of England and Ireland: and I have reason to believe that my proceedings in this respect have given a death-blow to all the hopes of a separation which may exist in the minds of any in those kingdoms.

On the same principles I most cordially wish for a reunion of the Protestant Episcopal and the Methodist Churches in these States. The object is of vast magnitude. Our work now reaches to Boston, northward; to Wilkes county, in Georgia, southward; and to Albany, Vermont, Lake Champlain, Redstone, and Kentucky, westward; a length of about 1300 or 1400 miles, and a breadth of between 500 and 1000. Our society in the States amounts to upwards of 60,000. These, I am persuaded, may, with safety, be multiplied by five, to give us our regular Sunday's congregations, which will make 300,000. If the calculations of some great writers be just, three-fifths of any given country consist of unadults; so that the families, the adults of which regularly attend divine service among us, amount, according to this mode of calculation, to 750,000; about a fifth part of these are blacks. How great, then, would be the strength of our Church, (will you give me leave to call it so? I mean the Protestant Episcopal,) if the two sticks were made one!

But how can this be done? The magnitude of the object would justify considerable sacrifices. A solemn engagement to use *your* prayer book in all our places of

worship on the Lord's day would, of course, be a *sine qua non*, a concession we should be obliged to make on our part, (if it may be called a concession,) and there would be, I doubt not, other concessions to be made by us. But what concessions would it be necessary for you to make? For the opening of this subject with all possible candor, it will be necessary to take a view of the present state of the ministry in the Methodist Church, in these States.

We have about 250 travelling preachers, and a vastly greater number of local preachers, I mean preachers who live on their plantations, or are occupied in the exercise of trades or professions, and confined to a small sphere of action, in respect to their ministerial labors. About seventy of our travelling preachers are *elders* (as we call them) or presbyters. These are the most eminent and most approved of the whole body; and a very excellent set of clergy I really believe they are. We have about the same number of deacons among the travelling preachers, who exercise the office of deacon, according to the plan of the Church of England. These ministers, both presbyters and deacons, must be elected by a majority of the conference before they can be ordained. A superintendent *only* ordains the deacons, and a superintendent must make one of the presbytery for the ordination of a priest or elder; and the superintendents are invested with a negative voice in respect to the ordination of any person that has been elected for the office either of elder or deacon. Among the local preachers there is no higher office than that of a deacon. The local preacher does not pass through an election for this office; but if he bring a testimonial, signed by three elders, one of whom must be what we call a presiding elder, one who has the government of a district, i. e. several circuits joined together, three deacons, three unordained preachers, and the majority of the class of which he is a member, or the stewards and leaders of the whole society of which he is a member, a superintendent may then, if he please, ordain him; and a great many of the oldest and wisest of the local preachers have been ordained deacons on this plan.

Now, on a re-union taking place, our ministers, both elders and deacons, would expect to have, and ought to have, the same authority they have at present, of administering the ordinances according to the respective powers already invested in them for this purpose. I well know that they must submit to a re-ordination, which, I believe, might be easily brought about, if every other hindrance

was removed out of the way. But the grand objection would arise from *the want of confidence* which the deacons and unordained preachers would experience. The present bishops might give them such assurance as would perhaps remove all their fears concerning *them*; but they could give no security for their successors, or for any new bishops who may be consecrated for the Episcopal Church in those States which have not at present an Episcopal minister. The requisition of *learning* for the ministry (I mean the knowledge of the New Testament in the original, and of the Latin tongue) would be an insuperable objection on this ground, as the present bishops, and the present members of the general convention can give no *sufficient* security for their successors. And the preachers could never, I believe, be induced to give up the *full* confidence they have in their present superintendents, that they shall in due time rise to the higher offices of the church, according to their respective merits, for any change of situation in which the confidence they should then possess would not be equivalent.

But what can be done to gain this confidence on the plan of a re-union of the two churches? I will answer this important question with all simplicity, plainness, and boldness; and the more so, because, 1st, I am addressing myself, I have no doubt, to a person of perfect candor; 2dly. I have a re-union so much at heart, that I would omit nothing that may, according to the best of my judgment, throw light on the subject; 3dly. Because I think I am not in danger from your charitable spirit, to be suspected, in the present instance, of pressing after worldly honor; as it is likely I shall be elected President of the European Methodists, and shall not, I believe, receive greater marks of respect from the Methodists in these States, supposing I ever be a bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, than they are at present so kind as to show me.

Mr. Asbury, our resident superintendent, is a great and good man. He possesses, and justly, the esteem of most of the preachers, and most of the people. Now if the general convention of the clergy consented that he should be consecrated a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on the supposition of a re-union, a very capital hindrance would be removed out of the way.

Again, I love the Methodists in America, and could not think of leaving them entirely, whatever might happen to me in Europe. The preachers and people also love me.

Many have a peculiar regard for me. But I could not *with propriety*, visit the American Methodists, possessing in our church on this side of the water an office inferior to that of Mr. Asbury.

But if the two houses of the convention of the clergy would consent to your consecration of Mr. Asbury and me as bishops of the Methodist Society in the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States, (or by any other title, if that be not proper,) on the supposition of the reunion of the two churches, under proper mutual stipulations; and engage that the Methodist Society shall have a regular supply, on the death of their bishops, and so, *ad perpetuum*, the grand difficulty in respect to the preachers would be removed—they would have the same men to confide in whom they have at present, and all other mutual stipulations would soon be settled.

I said, *in respect to preachers*, for I do not fully know Mr. Asbury's mind on the subject. I have my fears in respect to his sentiments; and if he do not accede to the union, it will not take place so completely as I could wish. I wish you could see my sinful heart, but that is impossible.

I think I need not observe that, if things were brought to a happy issue, we should still expect to enjoy all our rights as a *society* in the most exclusive sense, as we do now in Europe: I mean the receiving or rejecting members in or from our classes, bands, love-feasts, &c.

I have had the honor of three interviews with Bishop White on this subject, and some correspondence. In the present state of things, I must entreat you to lay this business only before your confidential friends; and if you honor me with a letter by the June packet, directed to the Rev. Dr. Coke, at the new chapel, City road, London, I will write to you again immediately after the English conference, which will commence in Manchester the last Tuesday in next July. The importance of the subject on which I have now written to you, will I think prevent the necessity of an apology for the liberty I have taken in writing to you.

Permit me to subscribe myself, with great respect,
Right Rev. Sir,

Your very humble and obedient servant,

THOMAS COKE.

Philadelphia, May 14, 1791.

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